PHOTOGRAPHIC VIEWS

IN

MADURA

TRACY

PART 4

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PHOTOGRAPHIC VIEWS

IN

MADURA.

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BY CAPTAIN L. TRIPE, GOVERNMENT PHOTOGRAPHER,

MADRAS PRESIDENCY.

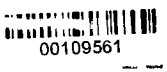
PART IV.

With Descriptive Notes,

BY

REV. W. TRACY, M. A.

1858.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LIST OF VIEWS WITH DESCRIPTIONS.

No. I.

Palace of Tirumalnaik, at Madura.

The Palace of which a view of the Eastern side is here given was erected, as its name indicates, by Tirumalnaik the 10th Rajah of the Carnatic line of Princes. He was a ruler of enlarged views and great energy: and though the ancient glory of the Pandian Kingdom had long departed, he added lustre to its remains. He commenced his reign A. D. 1621 or 1622, and is said to have reigned nearly or quite forty years. His reign was not one of entire peace, as he had to defend his dominions from the attacks of the Mysoreans and from the occasional insubordination of his subject Polygars. Considering the limited extent and unsettled condition of his kingdom, the works which he has left testify to the magnificence of his character. His revenue is said to have amounted to nearly £1,000,000, of which he devoted one tenth to purposes of religion. The occasion of his religious magnificence is stated, in accordance with the prevailing superstitions, to have been the appearance of the god to heal the King when in a precarious state of health. In consequence of the vow then made, the king commenced at once the splendid works which remain to the present time as witnesses of his piety. Besides the erection of the Palace, and the New Choultry which have conferred upon him enduring fame, he repaired and greatly enlarged the Temple of Minatchi, richly endowing it, and instituted, or renewed, the celebration of the festivals which are still conducted with great splendor. The large Teppa-kulam or tank, nearly two miles from Madura on the road to Ramnad is also his work. He is also said to have commenced at one and the same time sixty four Towers, over as many Temples between Seringham and Cape Comorin, and to have built Choultries, at the distance of every 7 or 8 miles, on the road from the Northern boundary of his dominions to the Southern point of the Peninsula.

The Palace of which the above is one view, is regarded by native writers as the glory of all his works. Many buildings included within the precincts of the Palace, have entirely disappeared, and those which remain are, it is sad to say, rapidly hastening to decay, but enough is still left to give some indication of their former splendor.

The Palace is a vast collection of halls and pavilions, covered with terraces and domes, resting upon massive pillars and arches, the prevailing style of architecture being the Saracenic.

According to popular tradition there was a subterranean passage connecting the Palace with the Temple of Minatchi, through which the kings proceeded into the presence of the god previous to their own beatification.

After the death of Tirumalnaik, his successors frequently resided in Trichinopoly on account of the greater strength of that Fort, and the Palace of Madura was to some extent neglected; and during the reign of his grandson, Chokanatha Naik, the Mysoreans seem to have occupied the Fort and Palace of Madura for a period of three years. About A. D. 1700, Madura was ruled by Mangammal, as regent for her grandson Vijia Ranga Chokanatha Naik. She was a woman of great energy. Many Choultries and the splendid avenues of trees radiating in various directions from Madura, and extending to great distances, remain as indications of her munificence and interest in the comfort of her people. Vijia Ranga leaving no children was succeeded by his wife Minatchi Amman. Her right to the throne was, however, disputed, and the intervention of the Nawab of Arcot was sought by each party.

Chanda Sahib, the Mahomedan general, obtained possession of the Fort of Trichinopoly by treachery, and securing the person of Minatchi Amman, threw her into prison, where she is said to have taken poison, ending at the same time her own life and the rule of the Carnatic race of Princes.

Deceptive hopes of restoration to power were, from time to time held out by the Nawabs of Arcot to the ejected Royal Family, but they were never fulfilled, and the only remaining representatives of the race are said to be now living in obscurity in the Eastern part of the District of Madura.

The very neat building in the foreground of the view was erected by G. P. Fischer Esquire, for the accommodation of a School for Hindoo Britons.

No. II.

Entrance to the Quadrangle of the Palace.

The Entrance represented in the view leads into the Quadrangle in front of the Sessions Court. It is of recent origin, having been opened for the convenience of the Court. The massive wall, 44 feet in height and 6 in thickness, through which the Entrance passes, forms a part of the S. E. angle of the Palace. It was in close proximity to the Eastern wall of the Fort, which may account for there having been no entrance on this side. From this S. E. angle, a high wall of brick faced with stone ran to the West and then to the North, forming an enclosure to the Palace precincts. This wall has been removed within the the past 20 years to allow a free circulation of air among the mass of native huts, which have encroached upon the space once filled with the stately edifices connected with the Palace.

No. III.

Arcade in Quadrangle.

This arcade is immediately in front of the Sessions Court and forms an entrance to it. The pillars on the left are the first of three lines of columns supporting an elevated cloister which surrounds the Quadrangle. The steps forming the ascent from the Quadrangle to the Hall of Audience, now occupied by the Sessions Court, were formerly flanked by two equestrian statues in the best style of Hindu sculpture, one of which still remains in a mutilated state near the entrance.

No. IV.

Facade of the Western side of the Quadrangle.

This Facade is on the Western end of the Quadrangle immediately in front of the Sessions Court. The columns are of stone covered with chunam and finely polished. They are 40 feet high and five feet in diameter. The arches are elaborately ornamented, and among the figures are two which are supposed to represent angels, and which have perhaps given rise to a tradition that Robert de Nobili, the first Jesuit missionary to Madura, had something to do with the architecture of the Palace. The foundation of the tradition seems to be a very slender one.

The Quadrangle of which the view gives the western Facade is 244 feet in length, and 142 feet in width, including the arcade on a level with the Quadrangle, parts of which may be seen in the Views, Nos. 3 and 5.

On three sides of the Quadrangle is an elevated arcade 40 feet wide, the arches of which rest upon three rows of massive stone pillars. In the middle of the Quadrangle was formerly a tank which occupied nearly half the area but is now filled up.

No. V.

Arcade on the right side of the Entrance.

The arcade represented in the view is on the East end of the Quadrangle, the columns on the left rising directly from the ground to the height of 40 feet. The pillars on the right are 16 feet in height to the top of the capital, and rest upon a terrace elevated about 8 feet above the floor of the Quadrangle. Together with two other rows of similar pillars, they form part of an elevated cloister which entirely surrounds the Quadrangle, the roof of which is in parts terraced, and in other parts rises into lofty arched halls, the crown of the arch being nearly 70 feet from the floor of the cloister.

No. VI.

The Sessions Court.

The view represents a part of what was called the swerga-vitasam or Celestial Pavilion. This was the Throne-room, or Hall of Audience. In the centre of this hall under the large dome, according to native authority, stood a square erection of polished granite with an enclosure of ivory, on which was the jewelled throne of the Rajah. Here he took his seat at the greater Navaratiri festival, surrounded by ensigns of royalty, and received the homage of his Princes. The dome is 60 feet in diameter, the centre being about 60 feet above the floor of the hall.

The portion of the hall under the great dome is occupied by the Sessions Court. Other parts of the same are also occupied by the subordinate and Mufti's Courts.

No. VII.

Roof of the Sessions Court.

This is an external view of the great dome of the Swerga-vitasam taken from the terrace above the hall. It was formerly surrounded by an arcade part of which is now standing. The structure on the right of the view is a lofty arched roof over the centre of the arcade on the south side of the Quadrangle. The view of the surrounding country from this terrace is one of great beauty.

No. VIII.

Domes and Turret in front of the Palace.

These two Domes stand over part of the Eastern side of the arcade in the Quadrangle, and the Turret over the N. E. corner of the elevated arcade. The terrace is said to have been erected to give the ladies of the palace an opportunity of witnessing the processions from the Temple to the Teppakulam on the Ramnad road.

No. IX.

Roofs of the Moonsiff's and Sub-Court.

The dome at the right of the view, is that of the Moonsiff's Court. The original design of the building is not now known.

The room until recently occupied by the Subordinate Court, the roof of which is given in the view, is 120 feet long and 67 wide including a narrow gallery on each side.

The roof is supported by arches resting upon pillars of stone.

This Hall was the palace theatre or Hall of Amusements. Here the King was accustomed to spend his evening in familiar converse with his ministers or friends; in listening to music; in witnessing theatrical exhibitions; or in admiring the skill of female dancers. Here, also, at the time of lighting up the Palace in the evening he received the daily homage of his people.

The building is now much gone to decay and in consequence of the recent fall of one end, the subordinate court has been removed to a part of the great Hall of Audience, near the Sessions Court.

No. X.

Hall on the North side of the Quadrangle.

This is a large hall entirely open from the top of the arch to the floor of the arcade on the North side of the Quadrangle. It is about 70 feet in height from the floor of the arcade, and has a narrow gallery on a level with the terrace and forming a connection between them.

The view represents, distinctly, remains of other parts of the Palace now gone to ruin.

No. XI.

Secundermalie.

Secundermalie or Tiruparangundram is one of the six principal places where Subramaniyan, the second son of Shiva, and the Hindu God of war, is worshipped. From Skanda, one of the names of this God, the rock probably derived its name. It is a mass of syenitic granite rising gradually from the plain on the East and falling off perpendicularly on the West. It is about 450 feet in height and not far from one and a half miles in circumference. The ascent is on the North side, represented in the plate, and is formed, most of the way, by flights of steps laid up with squared stones, or cut in the rock,

This hill is a place of great celebrity and is visited by pilgrims from all parts of the neighbouring country, and even from remote parts of India. On the rock are seven sacred teertams, or bathing places, visited by the pilgrims. One of these, the Casiteertam near the top on the West side, is never dry, and is well stocked with fish of the genus scorpæna, which being well fed by devotees, come at the call. This is looked upon as a miracle by the simple people who can in no other way account for their unusual intelligence. Near this teertam is a temple of Ganesa, standing on the edge of the precipice, at a height of some 400 feet, from which popular tradition says, devotees formerly precipitated themselves to secure an entrance into heaven.

On the South side, near the base, two rooms have been cut into the rock. In the outer room, pillars of the natural rock are left standing and exquisitely sculptured in alto relievo, but the figures have been badly injured, probably at the time of the Mahomedan conquest. One side of the room is nearly covered with inscriptions. At the annual car-drawing festival, many pilgrims roll on the ground around the hill, or measure the distance by repeated and painful prostrations, in fulfilment of vows, or to secure some favor from the god.

The fine choultry in the fore-ground once stood immediately in front of the Temple but was removed to make room for the present more splendid edifice.

No XII.

Pagoda at Secundermalie.

This is the principal Temple of Subramanian, Skandaswami, or Kartekeyan, the Hindu God of war, he is the second son of Siva. When gods and men were afflicted by four demons, children of Kasiba-muni, they applied for help to Siva, who shot forth from his eyes six fiery beams from which he produced the six-faced god Subramanian, by whom the demons were to be destroyed. The young god was placed for instruction under the tutorship of Bramah, who failing to answer some of the questions of his pupil, was put in confinement by him. Siva was obliged to interfere in order to settle the difficulty; and separating teacher and pupil, he gave to the latter for his residence the rock, now called by his name.

The Temple is of considerable antiquity, but the exact date of its erection is not known. The Tower is said to be 56 feet in height and the innermost shrine (18 or 20 feet square) is cut into the solid rock, and is on a level with the top of the choultry in front of the pagoda.

An endowment of 6 or 8 Villages was given the Temple by the celebrated Rajah Tirúmal Naik. The present endowment consists of 10 or 12 Villages besides lands in various places appropriated for the support of the officiating brahmins, dancing girls, servants, &c., connected with the Temple.

The large choultry on the right of the view is an oblong hall, 114 feet in length by 96 in breadth, the roof of which is supported by 94 granite pillars 16 feet high. This choultry was built under the regency of Mangammal about A. D. 1700, the expense being borne by persons of the Shanar caste. Statues of Mangammal and her grandson, the Rajah-Vijia-Ranga Chokanatha Naik are sculptured in high relief on one of the pillars of the choultry.

During the Polygar wars, the choultry was at one time occupied by English troops to the great disgust of the natives. To remove the intruders and to secure the infliction of a curse upon them, a Vairagee threw himself down from the top of the tower and dashed himself to pieces. The object of the self immolation is said to have been accomplished, the hated troops removed and the family of the suicide now occupy a portion of rent-free land as the reward of their father's devotion.

No. XIII.

Front of the Mundapam at Secundermalie.

~~The pillars represented in the plate are fine specimens~~ of the state of Hindu sculpture at the commencement of the 18th century. They are of granite, each pillar consisting of one stone, and the carving is as clear and fresh as if but just finished.

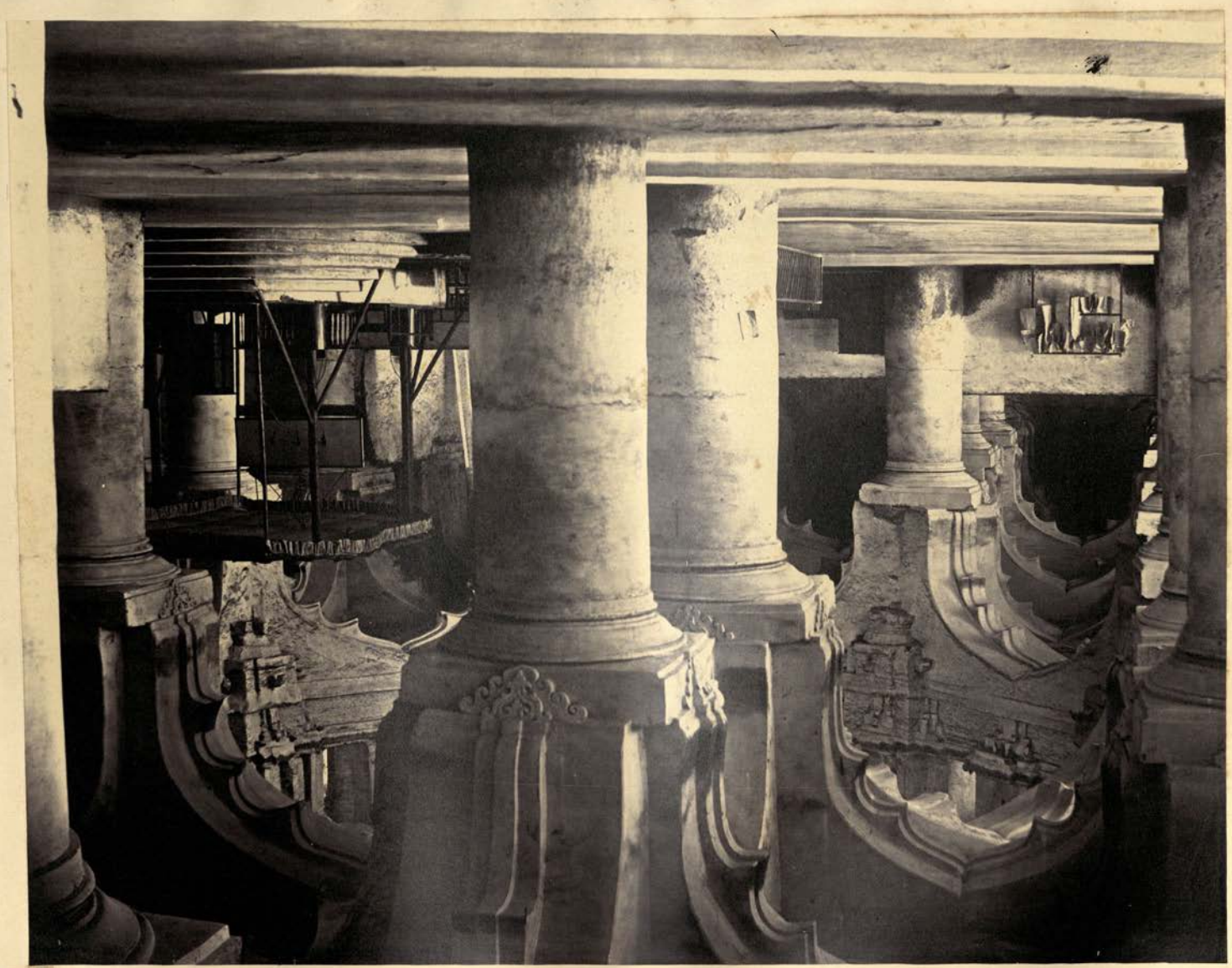
The four figures on the left and right sides of the entrance are representations of the god seated on horseback and in the act of destroying four demons, the daughter and three sons of Kasimuni, by the goddess Maya, who were the bitter enemies of gods and men. In a shrine on the pillar at the right, the god is quietly seated with his enemies under his feet. The second and third figures from the right are combinations of the Yali, a fabulous animals, elephants &c. On the base of the pillars are represented various mythological figures, animals, &c.

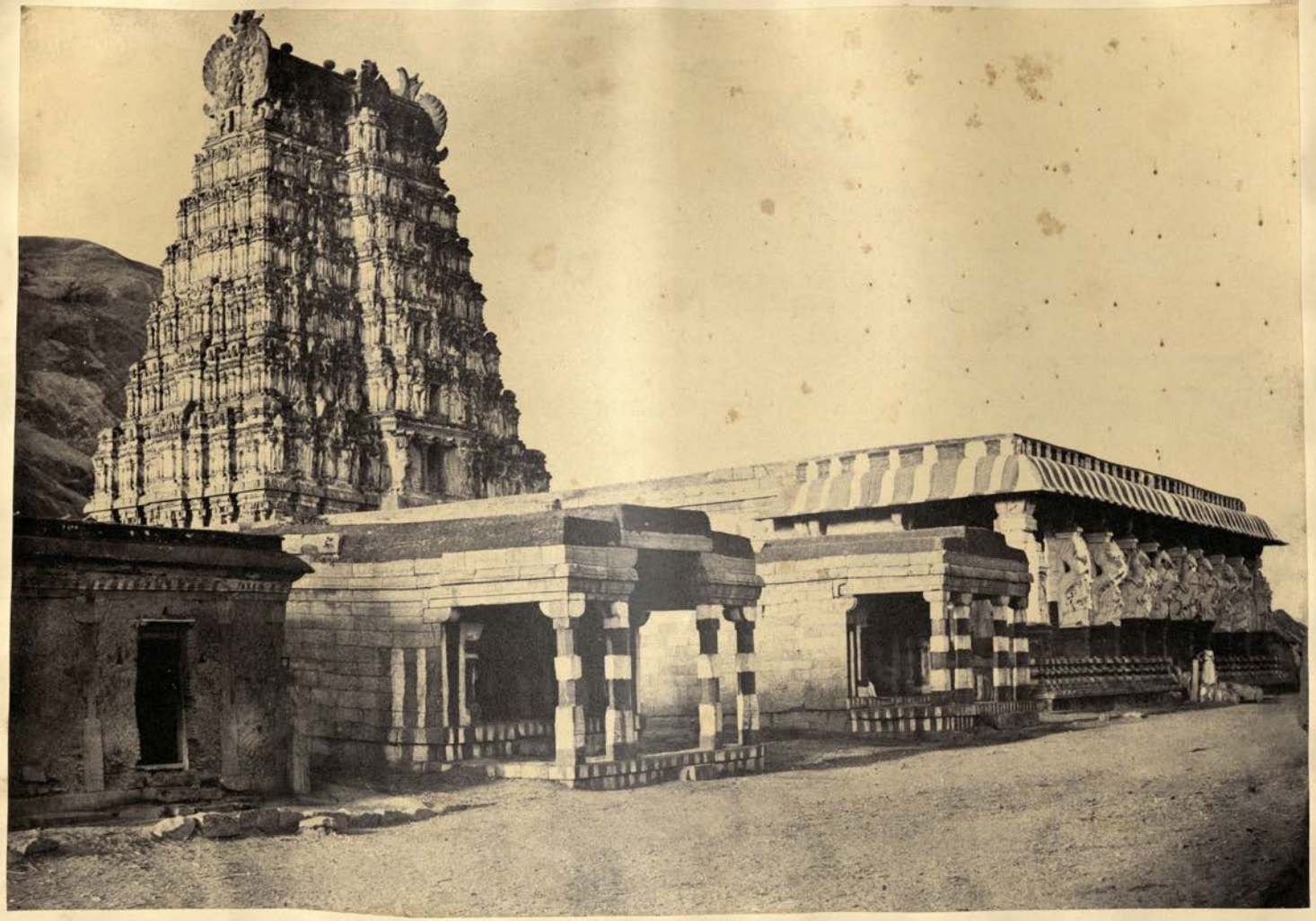
No. XIV.

Tomb of Peer Secunder.

This Mausoleum is regarded as a place of great sanctity by the Mahomedans of Southern India and is one of the few places at which religious offerings are made by them. When the fakeer lived, from whom the Mausoleum derives its name, is not known, but he is said to have wrought great miracles and to have died in the odour of sanctity.

The Mausoleum, which is a simple structure of granite, with minarets of brick and chunam, is supposed to have been erected about the middle of the last century by the Nawab of the Carnatic, who gave a neighbouring village as a manibum for the preservation of the building and for the support of the fakeers who perform daily ceremonies at the tomb. From the similarity between the name of the fakeer, Secunder, commonly called Secunder swami, and that of the god Skandaswami, who is supposed by the Hindus to reside here, there is reason to believe that the two are sometimes confounded in the minds of devotees, and both are worshipped as one and the same god.





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